

John, Otto. TWICE THROUGH THE LINES; THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF OTTO JOHN. London, Macmillan, 1972. 340 p.
Y 1844.8 .J6 J61 E5.

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'Kidnapped' for Philby check

Russian fears that Kim Philby was really an incredibly subtle double agent led the KGB to kidnap a West German security chief in Berlin, according to a book (YX) to be published this week.

The author, Dr Otto John, wartime anti-Hitler conspirator and one-time head of Federal Germany's internal security, says his disappearance from West Berlin in 1954 and reappearance in East Germany was due to kidnapping and not

defection. When he reappeared in West Germany 18 months later, he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for "traitorous deception."

Dr John, whose book is aimed at establishing his innocence, says he was in touch with British Intelligence from 1942, giving information of plots being prepared against Hitler. He was operating from Spain and Portugal and Philby was then in charge of the British Intelligence "Iberian desk."

Dr John says that after being

kidnapped he could never make out what the ultimate purpose in abducting him had been. But now, after analysing the book written by Philby about his life as a Russian spy, he could see it all clearly. He says his kidnapping came after the Burgess and Maclean defection and when Philby, thought by Britain to be a security risk, had been dismissed with £4,000 compensation.

Dr John adds: "This generous treatment by the British Government made Philby an object of suspicion to his Soviet friends and masters. It

was obviously of vital importance for the Soviet Secret Service to know whether this agent of theirs, who had been working in the highest British quarters, was reliable or whether he had been a double agent, playing it both ways."

By interrogating Dr John about his wartime links with British Intelligence, the KGB had convinced themselves that Philby had not been a double-crosser. "I am sure that in this way Philby was rehabilitated in Russian eyes without my ever knowing anything about it," he writes.

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ABSTRACT

News releases about book by Otto JOHN explaining his disappearance from West Berlin in 1954 as kidnapping rather than defection.

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